1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

wielded by the Shi'i mujtahids—doctors of the law—was formidable not only in 'Iraq but throughout Persia, where their word was always important, sometimes decisive, in the highest decisions of State. These divines, nearly all Persian by nationality, with their considerable wealth, their adulation by the simple, their concourse of pupils and followers—the more, since theological students were exempt from conscription—formed the nucleus of an unassimilable element in 'Iraq society and politics: anti-Sunni, anti-Turkish, anti-progressive, all-powerful over the Euphrates tribes, they could be neither placated nor ignored. Meanwhile the violent local politics of these towns were controlled by 'town Shaykhs' by no means holy, and by street gangs among which the famous Zugurd and Shumurd of Najf were notorious.

Although no region or social stratum in the territory was without its acquaintance with religion, its civilized and traditional social observances, and its lively imitative intelligence, yet manifestations of an intellectual or cultural life were rare. The general level of information regarding the world, past or present, and that of æsthetic appreciation, was low even among the literate classes of the towns; in the tribes, ignorance was profound. The arts were represented by a narrow range of traditional music, a few remembered Arab songs, the modern verses of two or three respected poets, geometrical decoration in brickwork, and the humblest of handicrafts. Disinterested learning could be found in rare scholars of the minority communities (such as Father Anastase the Carmelite), and among members of the upper-class families—Basha'yans, Alusis, Gaylanis, 'Umaris—who maintained domestic libraries and composed histories of their town or family. Of publishing, book production, or generally readable literary output there was nothing save the dull official newspaper. Archaeological excavation, 'Iraq's greatest claim to learned interest at the time, was to 'Iraqis an ignored or suspect mystery. The professional classes—lawyers, doctors, military officers—had acquired from Turkish sources a modicum of specialized knowledge reaching no standard admissible in Europe; in other branches of applied knowledge—agriculture, engineering, economics—there was nothing or almost nothing to show. Theology and ecclesiastical history stood in a class apart; in the Sunni 'religious' families it represented a body of authentic learning, in a field limited by its narrow tradition and the rejection of originality; in Shi'ism, and above all at the Holy Cities, these studies were synonymous with learning itself (since no others existed) and almost with virtue. Pursued for a lifetime of memorizing and arid pedantry, and attracting hundreds of pale disciples destined for lives of sheltered and endowed religion, this medieval learning of Shi'i dogma and tradition formed the

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

stock-in-trade and monopoly of the Shi'i 'alim and mujtahid, who claimed on this basis to lead tribe and town in all secular affairs.

5. 'IRAQ SOCIETY: THE TRIBES

If elements of comparative social progress were to be found in the towns, how far did the great majority of the inhabitants outside still live in a world remote from change?—a world in which a particular range of inherited ideas, repugnances and loyalties obtained: where the manners and restrictions of urban life were unknown: where social observances, marriage and kinship, and the settlement of feuds had their traditional rules, unknown to Turkish law, and the desert virtues of hospitality and gallantry had their own interpretation. This detached specialized world surrounded, on every hand, the towns and greater villages of 'Iraq, dominated all communications, held nine-tenths of the cultivated land. The tribes, homogeneous in code and outlook and each the focus of intense loyalties, differed among themselves in important respects. Of the Arab tribes, roughly half were Sunni, half Shi'i; some, notably the Muntafiq confederation, were Shi'i with a Sunni ruling family; others contained sections of both the faiths. In Kurdistan Shi'i tribes were rare and, in places, suspected of deeper heresy. Such difference of religious allegiance was reflected in the extent to which the Shi'i tribes could be influenced by the mujtahids, and in the Sunni respect for the person of the Caliph. To the statesmen of Turkey the Shi'i sympathies of half 'Iraq were an offence and embarrassment.

The environment of the tribe affected not only its economics but its mode of life. The Kurdish nomads moved among settled folk; the desert Arabs abode in their own empty isolated world, from which arose their mental remoteness, their inaccessibility to Government forces, but also their vulnerability through dependence on the markets of the desert fringes. Such were the Dhafir of south-western 'Iraq, the 'Aniza of the Shamiya steppe, the Shammar of the upper Jazira, and smaller groups within 'Iraq. The environment of the settled cultivating tribes varied according to the irrigation method whereby they cultivated, and by the nature of their crops: the fruit or tobacco grower of Kurdistan, the wheat and vegetable grower of Samarrā were different enough from the date gardener of Ba'quba or the Shamiya, or the rice-field workers of the Albu Muḥammad or the Fatla. These folk were 'ignoble' in the eyes of the 'noble', feckless, starving aristocracy of the desert. Of the tribes of every type, the origins were at least as various as their environments, but less easy to formulate. In them all, the vital unifying and loyalty-evoking element was the name itself, and the complex of shared traditions for which it stood; but the how

3eRoyal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
Iraq MHI

(*b*) *Christian Churches*

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Christianity was already gaining a hold in northern Mesopotamia by the middle of the second century A.D., when that region was part of the Roman Empire, while southern Iraq was governed as part of the Persian Empire of the successive Parthian and Sasanian dynasties. The so-called Church of Persia declared itself autocephalous in A.D. 424, and at the Council of Ephesus (431) adopted the doctrine of Nestorius, thus separating itself from orthodox Christendom. Subsequently two groups professing the Monophysite doctrine in opposition to the Council of Chalcedon (451) settled in the area and organized their own communities and hierarchies—the Syrian 'Orthodox' or Jacobite Church and the Armenian 'Orthodox' or Gregorian Church. From the seventeenth century onwards minority sections of these three churches have acknowledged Papal supremacy while retaining their own rites and customs and enjoying autonomy under their own elected Patriarchs: these sections are known respectively as the Chaldaean, Syrian Catholic, and Armenian Catholic Churches. Prior to the First World War the Nestorian Church, which had been largely destroyed by Timur Leng and had lost many of its remaining Iraqi members to the Chaldaean (Uniate) Church, survived mainly in the mountains of Persia and Turkey. At the end of the war some 25,000 of its members, now known as Assyrians, were introduced by the British authorities into Iraq and were settled extensively in the north, where they suffered severely in the events of 1933.[1] In addition to the above sects, there are smaller numbers of Orthodox and Catholics of Byzantine rite (the so-called Greek Catholics). Of them all the Patriarch of only one—the Chaldaean Church—resides in Iraq. Today the ancient theological differences which distinguished them are almost forgotten by their ordinary members, among whom the difference is rather one of liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline, and hierarchy; this is, however, sufficient to constitute minute nations rather than congregations, recognized by the Government as possessing competence in matters of personal status and other internal affairs. The Christians are more fully an urban community than the Muslims, and show a peculiar aptitude for commerce, crafts, and the professions; but there is also a large peasant community, Chaldaean, Syrian Orthodox, and Syrian Catholic, in the plains around Mosul, and Assyrians in the vicinity of Amadiya and Rowanduz.

[1] See above, pp. 57–8.

2: Masters E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd
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CHAPTER V

THE SOCIETY

Something of the composition of society in Rowanduz has been seen in the preceding pages, as well as the distinction between "wealthier" and "poorer" families, but the social structure of the town is much more complex than its cleavages along lines of occupation or of wealth, and requires more extended discussion, of particular importance inasmuch as this has proven the most significant area of change in recent decades. To approach this problem it is again necessary to have initial reference to the country as a whole, for in this larger province certain things of relevance to the life of the town must be appreciated. The sociology of Iraq does not appear to have had any single, adequate exposition in recent years, although much of what will be said in this connection can be found scattered in a wide variety of publications, and is commonplace to residents and travelers in the region.

Of the several divisions of the society of Iraq, the first is that between Muslims and non-Muslims. The adherents of Islam represent by far the greater part of the population, and, according to Quranic law, a Muslim girl cannot marry outside this group unless the suitor, if accepted, becomes a convert himself, a rule which is rigidly

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enforced. Of the non-Muslims, the Jews might be mentioned first, and their own custom of marriage is like that of Islam. By long tradition, heightened by the recent Israeli war, the Jews are greatly despised, but most of them have already migrated to their new country. The departure of the Jewish craftsmen and shopkeepers from Rowanduz has already been noticed. Of the Christians, an unconscious distinction is made in the Muslim mind between those who come from the Western world, and those who are native to the area or the Eastern Mediterranean. The military prowess and advanced culture of Europe or America are recognized, and almost any male from these countries is ipso facto an effendi or gentleman. The Briton, because of the part of his country's imperialism in the Middle East, may be disliked, but he is usually respected. On the other hand, Christians such as the Armenians, Chaldaeans, Greeks, and Nestorians, who have been Islamic subjects in the past, are looked upon with some contempt. The Armenians and Greeks are largely urban minorities, engaged in commerce, and are generally vilified, as are Jews and certain Syrians in the cities, as cheats and thieves. The Chaldaeans and the Nestorians, most of the latter displaced from their homeland in Turkey after the first World War, were once exclusively engaged in agriculture, and, as a peaceful folk, were not considered particularly different from Muslim peasants. Kurdish chieftains and their men have been invited to Nestorian festivals and there has been

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